

IN THE CLAIMS:

1. (Previously Presented) A method of payment of goods and services in an electronic commerce system, utilizing at least a customer agent and a merchant agent, at least one account manager associated with said agents for administration of customer accounts and merchant accounts, and at least a mediating trusted agent associated with one of said account managers and said merchant agent for checking purchases made by a customer from a merchant, said customer agent, merchant agent, account manager, and mediating trusted agent being interconnectable by a communications network, comprising:

① said merchant agent receiving an order of goods/service from said customer agent;
a customer account manager receiving an initiation message sent from said customer agent, said message including data for registration of said customer agent, and order information;

said customer account manager providing said customer agent with account data during a trading session being established between said customer agent and said merchant agent over the network;

said customer account manager amending and forwarding said initiation message to said mediating trusted agent for registration of said customer;

said customer account manager delivering a deposit to said mediating trusted agent;

said mediating trusted agent sending an information message including said deposit to said merchant agent; and

when the value of at least one purchase equals or exceeds the value of the deposit, or by instructions from said customer agent or merchant agent, stopping the trading session.

2. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 1, wherein a plurality of purchase orders is executed within limit of said deposit.

3. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 1, wherein said initiation message includes an amount of the deposit, a transaction identity, the identity of the merchant and the identity of the merchant's operator for locating a proper mediating trusted agent.

4. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 3, wherein said amended initiation message includes the deposit in the customer currency, a customer identifier, said transaction identity, and the identity of the merchant.

5. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 4, wherein said information message includes the deposit in the currency of the merchant, a trading session identity, and said customer identifier.

6. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 1, wherein after the step of said mediating trusted agent sends an information message, said merchant acknowledges the customer and the associated deposit to said mediating trusted agent.

7. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 6, further comprising:

said mediating trusted agent acknowledging the customer and the associated deposit to said customer account manager.

8. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 7, wherein said acknowledging including the current exchange rate and that said customer account manager forwarding said exchange rate to the customer agent.

9. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 1, wherein said customer account manager amending and forwarding said initiation message to said mediating trusted agent includes vouching for the customer.

10. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 1, wherein stopping the trading session includes said merchant agent receiving a trading session terminate message sent by said customer agent or a timeout.

C/ 11. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 10, further comprising:
said customer account manager sending a customer transaction record to said mediating trusted agent;

said merchant agent sending a merchant transaction record to the mediating trusted agent;

said mediating trusted agent comparing and evaluating said transaction records, resulting in clearing information;

said mediating trusted agent sending said clearing information to said customer account manager and a merchant account manager,

said customer account manager and a merchant account manager respectively sending said clearing information to said customer and said merchant, and based on said clearing information, processing said transaction records to a withdrawal record and a deposit record, respectively, storing the transaction records, and sending said withdrawal record to a customer billing system and said deposit record to a merchant billing system, respectively.

12. (Previously Presented) A payment system for use in an electronic commerce system, comprising a customer agent, a merchant agent, an account manager associated with said agents for administration of customer accounts and merchant accounts, and mediating trusted agent associated with one of said account manager and merchant agent for checking purchases made by a customer from a merchant, said customer agent and merchant agent, said account manager, and said mediating trusted agent being interconnectable by a communication network,

wherein said merchant agent is adapted to receive an order of goods/service from said customer agent,

said customer account manager is adapted to receive an initiation message sent from said customer agent, said message including data for registration of said customer agent, and order information and to provide said customer agent with account data during a trading session being established between said customer agent and said merchant agent over the network;

said customer account manager is adapted to AMEND and forward said initiation message to said mediating trusted agent for registration of said customer, and to deliver said deposit to said mediating trust agent;

said mediating trusted agent is adapted to send an information message including said deposit to said merchant agent; and

one or both of said merchant agent and customer agent is adapted to stop the trading session by their own initiative or when the value of at least one purchase equals or exceeds the value of the deposit.

13. (Previously Presented) A payment system according to claim 12, wherein said account manager and said mediating trusted agent are separate modules.

14. (Previously Presented) A payment system according to claim 12, wherein a plurality of transactions is executable within the limit of said deposit.

15. (Previously Presented) A payment system according to claim 12, wherein said initiation message includes the amount of the deposit, a transaction identity, the identity of the merchant, and the identity of the merchant's operator for locating a mediating trusted agent.

16. (Previously Presented) A payment system according to claim 15, wherein said AMEND initiation message includes the deposit in the customer currency, the customer currency, a customer identifier, said transaction identity, and the identity of the merchant.

17. (Previously Presented) A payment system according to claim 16, wherein said information message includes the deposit in the currency of the merchant, a trading session identity, and said customer identifier.

18. (Previously Presented) A payment system according to claim 12, wherein said merchant agent is adapted to acknowledge the customer and the associated deposit to said mediating trusted agent.

19. (Previously Presented) A payment system according to claim 18, wherein said mediating trusted agent is adapted to acknowledge the customer and the associated deposit to said customer account manager.

C1 20. (Previously Presented) A payment system according to claim 19, wherein said acknowledgement includes the current exchange rate, and wherein said customer account manager is adapted to forward said current exchange rate to the customer agent.

21. (Previously Presented) A payment system according to claim 12, wherein said customer account manager is adapted to vouch for the customer.

22. (Previously Presented) A payment system according to claim 12, wherein said merchant agent is adapted to receive a trading session terminate message sent by said customer agent.

23. (Previously Presented) A payment system according to claim 12, wherein said customer account manager is adapted to receive a customer transaction record sent by said customer agent;

said customer account manager is adapted to send said customer transaction record to said mediating trusted agent;

said merchant is adapted to send a merchant transaction record to the mediating trusted agent;

said mediating trusted agent is adapted to compare and evaluating said customer and merchant transaction records and generate clearing information;

said mediating trusted agent is adapted to send said clearing information to said customer account manager and a merchant account manager connected to said mediating trusted agent via said network;

CI said customer account manager and a merchant account manager are adapted to send said clearing information to said customer and said merchant, respectively;

based on said clearing information, said customer account manager is adapted to process said transaction records to a withdrawal record, store the transaction records, and send said withdrawal record to a customer billing system; and

based on said merchant clearing information, said account manager is adapted to process said transaction records to a deposit record, store the transaction records, and send said deposit record to a merchant billing system.

24-27 (Cancelled)